
Study Report

South La Crosse Transportation Study

Prepared for Wisconsin Department of Transportation, Southwest Region

1.0 Introduction

The South La Crosse Transportation Study was the result of a cooperative effort between the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT), La Crosse Area Planning Committee (LAPC), City of La Crosse, and the Town of Shelby. These agencies retained Short Elliott Hendrickson Inc. (SEH[®]) to assist in the development and coordination of the study efforts. The 18-month study began in the spring of 2004 and included a thorough investigation of the study corridor segments, an active public involvement process, comprehensive data collection, and intensive technical analysis. The study team concluded its work with the release of the South La Crosse Transportation Study Report in the summer of 2005. The report presents a range of mainline and intersection alternatives including strategies and recommendations that help achieve the long-term vision for the corridor.

1.1 Project Team

The South La Crosse Transportation Study included a multi-jurisdictional team including:

- Rick Vydrzal (WisDOT – District 5)
- Beth Price (WisDOT – District 5)
- Tom Faella (LAPC)
- Larry Kirch (City of La Crosse)
- Jeffrey Brudos (Town of Shelby)

The consultant team included the following individuals:

- Darren Fortney, AICP (SEH)
- Jim Hanson, PE (SEH)
- Charles Wade, AICP (SEH)
- Peter Rafferty, PE, AICP (SEH)
- Brian Smits, PE (SEH)

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- Dean Stodola, PE (SEH)
 - Heidi Schwarz (SEH)
 - Paul Chellevoid (SEH)
 - Karen Baker (Bay Ridge Consulting)
 - Nathan Guequirre (Bay Ridge Consulting)

1.2 Study Overview

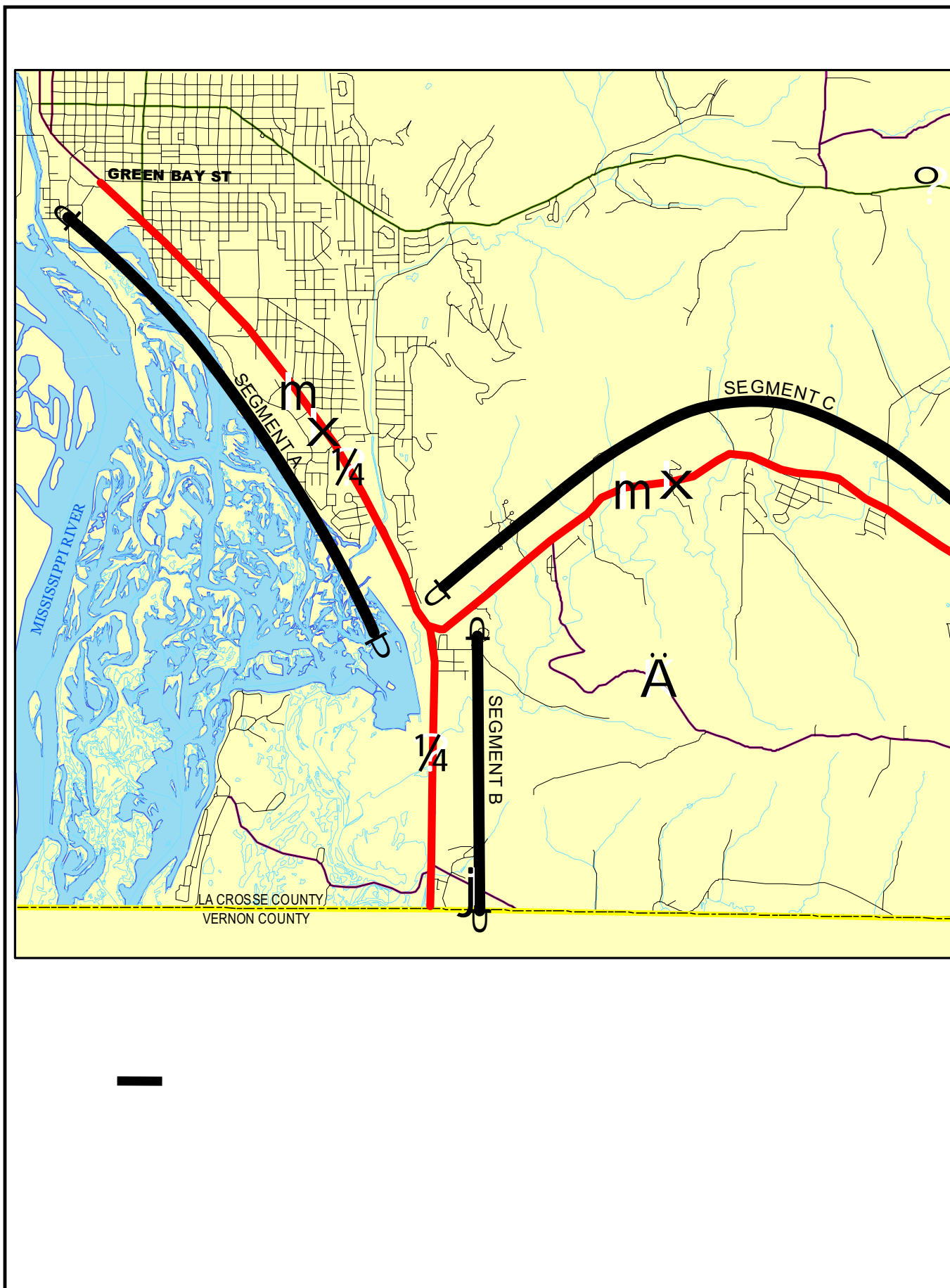
The South La Crosse Transportation Study included three highway segments located within the study area:

- Segment A (Urban Segment) – Located in the City of La Crosse and portions of the Town of Shelby on South Avenue/Mormon Coulee Road (US 14/61/WIS 35) between Green Bay Street and the US 14/61/WIS 35 intersection.
- Segment B (Rural Segment) – Located on WIS 35 between the US 14/61/WIS 35 intersection and the La Crosse/Vernon County Line (near Goose Island County Park).
- Segment C (Rural Segment) – Located on US 14/61 between the US 14/61/WIS 35 intersection and County M (near Ten Mile Hill).

The study limits extended approximately 0.5 miles from the roadway centerline for a total study area width of one mile. Natural and cultural factors located within the study limits include: areas of commercial and residential development, portions of the Mississippi River or its floodplains and associated wetlands, Pammel Creek, railroad right-of-way, multi-modal activities (travel modes that include pedestrian, bike, bus, and other non-vehicular methods), parks, archeological/historic sites, and hazardous materials sites (see Study Location Map, Figure 1).

The intent of the study was to identify a common long-term vision for the future of South Avenue/Mormon Coulee Road (Segment A). In addition, timing of improvements and programming options for the rural segments (Segments B and C) were also included in the study.

To address the goals of the study, this report includes information on the study purpose and need, an environmental scan, multi-modal issues, input and coordination, land use plans and ordinances, traffic, deficiency analysis, and strategies and recommendations sections.



1.3 Background of Study Area

The urban segment (Segment A) of the study area includes South Avenue/Mormon Coulee Road and lies between 0.17 mile and 0.4 mile from and roughly parallel to the Mississippi River. Like most urban highway corridors, South Avenue/Mormon Coulee Road has experienced the effects of transitioning land uses and incremental growth. In the urbanized area, land uses include residential, commercial, and some light industrial activities. The residential neighborhoods on the northern end of the corridor likely predate the current roadway alignment and consist of higher density smaller homes on a compact grid system of roadways. Residential development on the southern end of the corridor includes larger homes and multi-family housing on a more suburban style roadway system. Central portions of the corridor are predominantly commercial, developing in a strip pattern along both sides of the roadway. Commercial development ranges from smaller businesses such as auto repair shops and specialty retail activities to large volume retailers such as Shopko and Wal-Mart (see Figure 2, Existing Zoning Map).

Both the US and state highway system run concurrently on South Avenue/Mormon Coulee Road. Currently, the roadway accommodates regional trips, trips destined to the City of La Crosse, and local trips. South Avenue/Mormon Coulee Road is currently a US truck route.

WIS 35 (Segment B) from the US 14/61/WIS 35 intersection to the La Crosse/Vernon County Line is primarily rural in character. The roadway supports two small residential neighborhoods (one near the US14/61/WIS 35 intersection, and one near the La Crosse County/Vernon County Line), as well as a small strip of commercial activity near the county line. Commercial activities include auto repair and specialty retail activities. The development along the corridor is located on the east side of the roadway because of a parallel railroad corridor to the west, and the close proximity of US 14/61/WIS 35 to the Mississippi River floodplain.

Goose Island County Park is located west of the corridor and is accessed via County GI located just north of the La Crosse County/Vernon County Line. The park provides a number of amenities attracting campers, vehicles with boat trailers, and bike users.

WIS 35 within the study area has the Great River Road National Scenic Byway designation, which it received from the United States Department of Transportation in 2000. The designation signifies the importance of preserving the historical, cultural, natural and recreational value to communities and visitors along the route. The Mississippi River Parkway Planning Commission (MRPC) appointed in 1938 and in cooperation with WisDOT is the primary authority developing, planning and promoting the Great River Road.

US 14/61 (Segment C) from the US 14/61/WIS 35 intersection to County M (Ten Mile Hill) is a regional transportation facility passing through a predominantly agricultural landscape with a number of pockets of residential neighborhoods scattered along its route. The corridor is experiencing suburban type residential developments at various locations along the segment.

